

Nursing Home Consumer Choice Campaign Needs Assessment Report

Final Report

Solicitation/Contract No. 500-01-0002

Submitted to:

Annette Lang and Chris Koepke
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850

Prepared by:

Barents Group of KPMG Consulting, Inc.
1676 International Drive
McLean, VA 22102-4828

Under subcontract to:

Ketchum
2000 L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In an effort to improve the quality of care in nursing homes, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has implemented a multi-year program highlighting areas important to both nursing home residents and providers. In order to raise awareness of these quality improvement efforts, and to increase consumers demand for nursing home information, CMS is expanding the scope of existing efforts and launching a consumer awareness campaign, known as the Consumer Choice Campaign for Quality Care.

The purpose of the Consumer Choice Campaign for Quality Care is to provide consumers with information about the performance of nursing homes in order to help them make better informed decisions. CMS has proposed a list of nursing home performance measures drawn from the Minimum Data Set (MDS) to be publicly reported for the campaign.

The Barents Group of KPMG Consulting, Inc. (Barents) conducted comprehensive needs assessment research for CMS's Consumer Choice Campaign in the winter of 2001-02, seeking to address the central research question of how CMS can motivate consumers to use nursing home quality information to make better informed decisions. Within the context of this question, Barents developed objectives to identify the campaign's target audience and map the audience's decision-making environment to ultimately understand their motivations for using nursing home quality information.

Research Methods

- ◆ Literature review
- ◆ Nine focus groups with family caregivers, doctors, and hospital discharge planners
- ◆ Thirty-eight key informant interviews with community organizations, Quality Improvement Organizations, hospital discharge planners, nursing home associations, and other stakeholders

Key Findings

- ◆ The primary audience for the nursing home performance information is family caregivers.
- ◆ Consumers view quality differently from CMS's proposed clinical performance measures. Most caregivers evaluate nursing homes on the basis of cleanliness, caring, and staffing at times taking the quality of clinical care for granted.
- ◆ Consumers are not likely to use clinical quality indicators in isolation to make decisions. They also factor in information about cost, services, location, availability, as well as their own perceptions of quality.
- ◆ CMS's proposed performance measures may be perceived by consumers as negative and frightening.

- ◆ Most caregivers do not seek out information about nursing home information until a health crisis occurs because of guilt and stigma associated with placing their loved ones in nursing homes. Other factors that discourage caregivers from seeking out nursing home information include:
 - ◇ Perceived lack of nursing home choice
 - ◇ Family pressure and conflict
 - ◇ An overwhelming decision-making process.
- ◆ Key caregiver influencers include hospital discharge planners, physicians, consumer groups and community organizations, and the media.
- ◆ Doctors and discharge planners are willing to refer consumers to information about nursing home performance, but are concerned about the liability in recommending specific facilities. Additionally, due to heavy caseloads, doctors and discharge planners often face time constraints in counseling caregivers and patients.

Opportunities

- ◆ There is caregiver demand for nursing home quality information as well as the motivation to use it. Caregivers are highly concerned about the quality of care in nursing homes, and family caregivers want to ensure that they choose the best facility for their loved one.
- ◆ Caregivers, if placing a loved one in a nursing home directly from a hospital, can be an easily identifiable and easily located target audience because of the likelihood that they will interface with hospital discharge planners.
- ◆ Hospital discharge planners and physicians are willing intermediaries for nursing home quality information, even if limited in certain capacities.

Barriers and Challenges

- ◆ There is a disconnect between CMS's proposed performance measures and consumer perceptions of nursing home quality.
- ◆ Caregivers may have negative associations with proposed performance measures.
- ◆ The "problem-focus" of performance measures may create an adversarial relationship with providers and the nursing home industry as well as raise concerns regarding increased litigation against nursing homes.
- ◆ Campaign efforts may overlap with state and private efforts to provide nursing home information.
- ◆ There are concerns about reliability of MDS data and the proposed performance measures among physicians, discharge planners, and to some extent, the nursing home industry.
- ◆ Many consumers have limited or no choice of nursing homes due to factors such as cost, location and availability. Therefore, for some members of the target audience, the use of quality information to select a nursing home would not be relevant.

Preliminary Conclusions

- ◆ Caregivers are the primary audience for CMS's consumer choice campaign and may be motivated to use nursing home quality information if:
 - ◇ Caregivers are educated on the connection between quality of care and quality of life
 - ◇ Nursing home quality information is positioned to help caregivers with the problems of guilt, stigma, fear of the unknown, lack of control, and family pressure and conflict.
 - ◇ Nursing home quality information can be seen as addressing caregivers' central concern of securing and maintaining a safe, caring and comfortable nursing home placement for their loved ones.
- ◆ Discharge planners are key caregiver influencers, in addition to doctors/nurses, consumer groups and community-based organizations, and media. Mapping of the decision-making process has suggested that consumers desire and use nursing home quality information primarily at the time they are making nursing home decisions and rely on intermediaries to help them access needed information. CMS may consider:
 - ◇ Educating discharge planners on quality
 - ◇ Providing discharge planners with one to two-page handouts for patients/families discussing nursing home quality.
 - ◇ Utilize other channels in supporting a main discharge planner strategy. The channels include physicians who may intervene prior to a crisis point by educating caregivers about nursing home placement and quality; organizations such as the Alzheimer's Association who have vested interest and strong experience in counseling caregivers; and media to inform the professional and general public of the existence of CMS's new quality measures.
- ◆ Stakeholders are looking to CMS to work collaboratively to position nursing home performance information in a positive rather than punitive manner. Consumers as well as industry representatives are interested in CMS intentions to improve the quality of care. CMS can address stakeholder concerns by:
 - ◇ Better communicating with stakeholders about the quality initiative and inviting their input into the strategy development for a national campaign.
 - ◇ Publicly positioning the quality initiative as a proactive process of helping the industry ensure the best possible care for nursing home residents.
 - ◇ Continuing to support behind the scenes efforts to develop and maintain the quality measurement and improvement infrastructure.